



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

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SECRETARY HODEL SEEKS INCREASED EFFORTS

TO PROTECT MIGRATORY WATERFOWL

Secretary of the Interior Don Hodel today told the North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference that there must be increased emphasis on "safeguarding the quality wetlands" upon which waterfowl depend.

Hodel said he had ordered the closing of the Kesterson Wildlife Refuge reservoir in California when it became apparent that a partial failure of efforts to keep birds away from contaminated waters was a violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The Secretary pledged an immediate and diligent search for "permanent, scientific solutions" to the drainage problems which have contaminated the refuge reservoir and which threaten agricultural operation in the San Joaquin Valley.

Hodel asked for the assistance of the Conference membership in finding solutions to this and other Interior Department concerns. "I truly believe this Nation is best served by consultation, consensus, and accord on the major natural resource issues. If we can agree on the broader national policies that are right for America--that reflect the rights, values and needs of the American people--everyone will benefit."

The essential effort to reduce the national debt has "necessitated difficult policy choices," Hodel said, and the reduction of some good programs, but "I hope it is clear that the Administration believes the major resource endeavors of the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service will continue to be regarded as essential to the public good."

Hodel said that his appreciation for America's "national treasures" of land, water, mountains, forests and wildlife was engendered by his father "who left me convinced that those of us who love those natural resources have an obligation. . .to conserve and preserve them. And, from a more global perspective, our enthusiasm can instill similar spirit among our neighbors to pursue the same commitment."